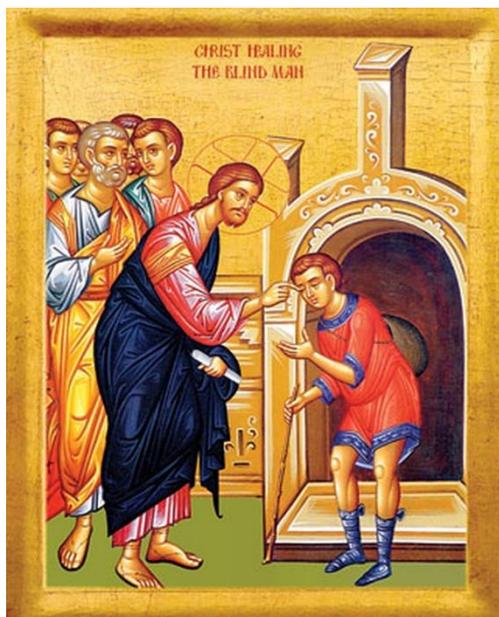


Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania + Wilkes-Barre Deanery

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



## Sunday of the Blind Man

**CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

**May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Dr. Theodore Federoff, Vice President

## *Today's Scripture Readings:*

*Epistle:* Acts 16:16-34  
*Gospel:* St. John 9:1-38

*Welcome to ALL our visitors and guests this morning via our live streaming! You are most welcome to be with us anytime!*

***CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!***

***CHRISTOS ANESTI! ALITHOS ANESTI!***

***CHRISTOS VOSKRESE! VOISTINU VOSKRESE!***

## Services, Events & Announcements

**\*\*Services are being streamed live on our website homepage & Facebook page\*\***

**Great Vespers – Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm**

**Divine Liturgy – Sunday May 31<sup>st</sup> @ 10am (Hours @ 9:40)**

**May 28<sup>th</sup> – The Ascension of Our Lord**

**Our Giving – May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Tithes/Offerings - \$685.00**

**Candle Offerings – \$50.00**

**Memorial Gift - \$100.00**

*From Your Pastor . . .*

*We are in the process of putting a plan together so that we can begin to open the doors of the Church, God Willing, soon!*

*Thank you to all who have been dropping off or mailing in their tithes and/or offerings. Even though we cannot gather, the Church is still trying to carry on. Glory Be to God!*

*God Bless You All,*

*+ Fr. Seraphim*

***Marriage: The essential element for a salvific union of two people***

The western world has seen a terrible downward trend in the number of couples choosing to get married. Of those couples who do, almost fifty percent of their marriages end in divorce. Those marriages that do last, see only a tiny fraction produce more than one or two children. Many couples choose to limit the number of children, or have no children at all, because they want a more economically satisfying life and see children as an obstacle to a comfortable lifestyle. This is in absolute opposition to the views held by our ancestors.

Seattle has been designated as one of the loneliest cities in the United States, and many believe this is directly related to the fact that this great city has the lowest number of children outside of San Francisco. Since couples who have children tend to get involved in local schools and churches, in their desire to support their children, couples without children have fewer options, from the start, where they can cultivate friendships with other couples. If the social life of a couple is centered around the workplace, or the nightlife, a major source of support for marriage is undermined.

Bars, nightclubs, and the workplace, hardly cultivate the support of marriages. Whereas, involvement with other committed parents in the Parent Teacher Student Association, and active participation in parishes, bring people together for the common good of children. These two institutions have a long history of supporting couples in committed relationships.

The central problem to the institution of marriage is directly related to an increasingly secularized society that does not value the traditional, biblical way of life. Couples, at an alarming rate, start out their relationships in an intimate manner. Sexual intercourse before marriage is seen as an essential component of their relationship. The idea of saving themselves for the marriage bed, seems old fashioned, and outdated.

Living together before marriage dooms the relationship from the beginning because both the man and the woman are focusing on their own needs, to the exclusion of the “union”. Such relationships are based on personal needs and not on the biblical basis for marriage, where procreation is one of the essential components that binds the couple in a love relationship that is other focused.

This approach to coupling is responsible for the declining populations of Western countries, where only Islamic marriages are producing the number of children that will guarantee the cultural survival of future generations. Western Civilization is dying out as a direct result of this sociological and religious departure from the biblical image of marriage.

It is important to remember that Christians are called to live biblically based, chaste lives, outside marriage. Marriage is about

the bringing together of man and woman for the God sanctioned propagation of our species. God gives us sufficient grace to live virtuous lives, and we Orthodox Christians know that salvation is not about ourselves alone, but about all of us together. Thus, a loving and supportive Christian community supports all of us on our journey into God's kingdom.

Finally, the key element that makes marriage salvific is the surrendering of self-will for the common good. The husband and wife, at the very moment the wedding crowns are placed on their heads, should be committed to being obedient to one another. The husband, although head of the household, is not his wife's boss, nor should he act as some sort of overlord. Rather, the archetype for the husband is that of Christ as the Great Bridegroom. The symbol of the crowns is not about a young prince and princess, but symbolic of the crowns of martyrdom, where the wife and husband surrender their self-will, to one another.

The couple who will experience and enjoy a long life together, are the couple whose marriage is centered in Christ, and the give and take that comes from a commitment to the welfare of each other. Just as Christ surrendered His life for the love of His Church, so the husband and wife surrender their lives to one another.

*With Love in Christ,*

*Abbot Tryphon*

*All Merciful Saviour Monastery, Vashon Island, WA.*